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ABSTRACT

A study examined the personal, educational, and career factors that influence the success of women who hold high-level positions in the administration of vocational education at the regional, state, and federal levels. Of the 70 women who were originally asked to participate, 46 responded. Two data collection methods were used: a written questionnaire designed to collect demographic information and audiotaped responses to a set of discussion questions. The prototype of the successful female vocational administrator was both similar to and different from that of the successful female corporate executive. Most of the subjects grew up in traditional, stable, happy home environments with stereotypical role models. Rather than being a detriment, this traditional background appeared to provide the women with a good self-image, a feeling of security, and support throughout their growing years. Most were also closer to their mothers than to their fathers. The majority felt that their educational preparation (including their human relations/social science and professional courses) was adequate for the position they now hold and stated they would make the same career choice again. Most had an unstructured support system throughout their careers (provided by family and colleagues), with few citing specific individual mentors. Most felt that they had been treated differently than their male counterparts, and only a third felt that women support other women in leadership positions. Six appendices provide: the list of study participants; the letter to the group requesting participation in the study; the letter to the Home Economist group requesting participation in the study; the cover letter to participants in the study; the instruments (questionnaire, guidelines); and five samples of follow-up letters. (MN)

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FINAL REPORT

WOMEN IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION LEADERSHIP POSITIONS: FACTORS INFLUENCING SUCCESS

January, 1988

by

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Deepest appreciation is extended to the forty-six women across the nation who participated in the study, especially for their willingness to openly share their personal lives and career experiences. They are special people who are dedicated to their profession and have made the way easier for the women who will follow them.

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

In recent years, considerable attention has been given to the concerns and issues of women in leadership/managerial positions. To a large extent, research and articles focus on women in the corporate world with little attention being given to women in high level leadership positions in educational and human services professions. We who are preparing women for these professions realize that female students do not see themselves as leaders and do little to prepare themselves for leadership roles. If we are to impact on their attitudes and desires and enhance their opportunities for advancement, we have an obligation to provide students with current and appropriate information which will help them become successful in the work place and be better prepared for the changing gender roles of today's women.

In the Spring of 1986 this exploratory study of women in high level leadership positions in vocational education, a field which has always been male dominated, was initiated. The study explores the growing-up years, professional preparation and career experiences of forty-six successful women.

The design of the study is based on the classic best seller, The Managerial Woman by Hennig and Jardim. They interviewed 25 successful women executives to identify commonality of experience which explained their career choices and the factors which contributed to their success.

A comprehensive list of women in vocational education administration prepared by two national groups was used to select a sample of 70 women in high level positions in regional, state and federal education agencies. Fifty-six agreed to participate and forty-six responded. The sample included women with backgrounds in the stereotypical female profession of home economics and those prepared in other vocational fields (business, health, trades, etc.). Since time and money were not available to conduct personal

interviews, two instruments were designed to gather data; a questionnaire to collect demographic information, and a series of discussion questions which participants responded to on audio tape.

Responses to the questionnaire were coded and placed on scan sheets. A computer analysis produced means, percentages and frequency distributions on the family, marital, educational and work history of respondents.

The audio-taped portion of the study was open-ended and designed to encourage comments and examples from life experiences. A descriptive analysis was made of the respondent's growing up years, professional preparation and career experiences focusing on common threads, concerns and suggestions for improving opportunities for women.

The results of this study will add to the limited body of knowledge on women in vocational educational leadership, provide feedback for use in workshops and courses on leadership and management, and give direction for replicating the study with similar populations in higher education, other areas of educational leadership, and human services.

INTRODUCTION

Young women now have an opportunity to make choices. They are encouraged to enter those professions previously dominated by men where they can obtain money, power and status. This is appropriate because women should have the same opportunities as men to improve the quality of their lives. At the same time, we need to be concerned that fewer women are selecting careers in the typical female areas such as education and human services. What will happen to our society if most of our young people elect to become engineers, doctors, corporate managers, etc.? What advice and counsel do we provide young women? Do we have sufficient information to help them make appropriate choices?

Many studies have been done on women in management/leadership and a prototype of the successful woman in business has emerged, including the identification of factors which contributed to her success. This is important information but it can be misleading because women who hold high level positions in the corporate world are unique in many respects.

We know very little about women who achieved leadership positions in the fields of education and human services, why they have been successful, if they are satisfied with their careers, and if they are different from women in the corporate world. This research is an attempt to explore some of those issues.

A Directory of Women Administrators in Vocational Education compiled by the National Center for Research in Vocational Education (8) and the later edition published by the American Vocational Association (1) were used to identify participants for the study. Seventy subjects were contacted to participate. Of those contacted, five had left their positions in vocational education, one was deceased, two chose not to participate and seven did not respond.

The fifty-five who responded did so with great enthusiasm. They expressed the need for this type of study, were excited about being involved and provided encouragement and support for the project. Nine of the fifty-five did not return the requested information which left forty-six who participated in the study.

Of the forty-six subjects, twenty-seven had traditional home economics backgrounds and nineteen were educated in other vocational/educational disciplines (hereafter referred to as the General group). Twenty-eight states were represented, including Hawaii and Puerto Rico.

Agency representation included; twenty-three from state vocational education agencies, eight from regional vocational institutions, six from the university level, three state advisory council leaders, two from the federal level, and four from the National Center for Research in Vocational Education at The Ohio State University.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES: SUMMARY

Personal History

The questionnaire used to gather data on the subjects' personal, family, marital and work history can be found in Appendix E-1. Following is a summary of the results by specific areas.

Age

The age of subjects ranged from 36 to 60+ years with 33 percent falling between 46-50 years of age (15). Twenty-eight percent (13) were between the ages of 36-45 and 39 percent (18) were over 51 years of age. Eight were retired. The General group was slightly younger than the Home Economists.

Marital Status/Children

Thirty-one subjects were married, ten for the second time. One each was currently divorced, separated and widowed. Eleven had never been married.

Twenty-one had no children and 10 had only one child (68 percent). Only eight had three or more children. Two subjects did not respond to the question.

Immediate Family Support

Of those that were married, husbands were more supportive of their wives' careers (71.7 percent) than were the children (46.7 percent). There was slightly more support by husbands and children for women in the General group than for the Home Economics group.

Family History

Family Composition

Twenty-six or 56 percent of the subjects were first born or an only child

(6). The mean number of children per family was 3.3. Sixty-seven percent had no older brothers (31) and 80 percent had no older sisters (37). Fifty-three percent had younger brothers (24) and 48 percent had younger sisters (22). The mean age span between the youngest and oldest child was 6 years.

Family Stability

None of the parents of the subjects were divorced. Forty-two lived with both parents during their growing-up years and three lived with mother only (one did not respond). Five fathers are deceased.

Parents' Education

Twenty mothers had more education than fathers and nine fathers had more education than mothers. Thirty-three fathers and 26 mothers completed grade 12 or less. Twelve mothers completed 16 years of education and two went beyond this level. Seven fathers earned a four year degree and three received an advanced degree.

Parents' Occupation

Fathers' occupations were primarily in the traditional male fields of trades and industry, agriculture and business (70 percent). Fifty-nine percent (27) said mothers had an occupation with 52 percent (24) in the areas of business, services and education. Thirty-nine percent said mother was employed while they were growing up and 13 percent of the mothers held a supervisory position. There was very little relationship among the careers selected by subjects, their siblings and parents. Seventeen percent (8) of the subjects selected a career related to mother's occupation, and nine percent (4) to fathers. Thirty-seven percent (17) of brothers had occupations related to their fathers' work.

Educational History

Over three-fourths (35) of the subjects enrolled in an academic program while in high school. All received a baccalaureate degree. Only one did not go on for an advanced degree.

Of the 45 who received a masters degree, seventeen Home Economists majored in vocational education (2) or education (15) and eleven from the General group followed a similar route. Just over 50 percent completed a doctoral program. Of these, 70 percent majored in vocational education (6) or other educational fields (11). Four doctorates were in home economics.

Work History

All of the subjects had worked more than eleven years with the average range of years worked being 21-25 years. Home Economists were employed longer than the General group. Seven of the eight retirees were home economists.

The average number of positions held was five and there was little difference between the two groups. Fifty-five percent (25) had obtained their first promotion by the age of 30; 41 percent (19) were promoted in their thirties and 4 percent (2) after the age of 40. Thirty percent (14) held a leadership position before age 30; 57 percent (26) reached this level in their 30's, and 13 percent (6) were over 40 years of age before they held a leadership position. Stating it another way, it took 5-10 years for 34 of the subjects to achieve a leadership position. Six did not attain this level for 11-15 years, and six worked for 16-28 years before assuming a leadership role.

AUDIO-TAPE RESPONSES: SUMMARY

Introduction

This part of the study provided a great deal of information on the subjects growing-up years, professional preparation, career experiences and opinions about the future for women in leadership.

A series of open-ended questions/statements were prepared for use by subjects when talking about the above mentioned areas on audio-tape (Appendix E-2). These statements were developed to guide the thinking and responses of the subjects so that there would be a degree of consistency in their answers. The process was called "an interview without an interviewer". Subjects were encouraged to discuss items in-depth, to add opinions, comments and suggestions and to share their life experiences as freely as possible.

Qualitative data is more difficult to analyze and organize for reporting purposes. Since subjects were free to discuss an issue from a variety of perspectives, sometimes they forgot or omitted items which were to be addressed. Also, some questions allowed for more than one response. The reader should remember these facts when reviewing this section.

It would be impossible to include in this report all of the information gathered on forty-six audio-tapes. The in-depth comments and rich material now available on this important topic will have to wait for a later publication. The following includes a summary of the responses by major headings.

Growing Up Years: Early, High School and College Years

Traditional/Non-Traditional Home Environment

The data support the fact that subjects grew up in a traditional home environment (83 percent). Parents' attitudes toward male/female roles were

stereotypical (77 percent). Forty-six percent said they were encouraged to conform, 30 percent were encouraged to take risks and 22 percent said neither.

When asked if they were expected to attend college or marry, 59 percent said "attend college". An additional 22 percent said "both", but were expected to attend college first. Education was considered very important by 83 percent of the parents.

Type of Child/Interests

Over half of the subjects reported that they were competitive, adventurous, aggressive or independent as children. Although twenty said they were reserved, six indicated that they were reserved but competitive in academic areas.

They were all active during the growing-up years in school and organizational activities. Academics were important during the early years while school related leadership activities rated highest in high school and college. Sports were enjoyed, but typical female activities (e.g. dolls, cooking, crafts) received little attention.

Subjects excelled at academics and there was a strong interest in music/drama. They received their greatest satisfaction from accomplishments such as good grades and "doing a good job". As they grew older, leadership opportunities were most satisfying.

It is interesting that most respondents had difficulty recalling negative issues. About 50 percent did not respond to the question regarding "major problems experienced". Nine said they were not good at sports and eight identified math/science as being difficult subjects. Five said they "didn't fit-in", two cited poor self-concept and two had experienced a serious illness.

Family Relationships

Approximately one-half said they were closest to their mother and only six said father. Two lost their father early in life and three fathers died when the subjects were in their teens. Two expressed fear of father. Parents and family provided a strong support system throughout the growing-up years. The extended family was a source of support also. Twenty-eight said they had good to excellent relations with their siblings while eight indicated a "typical " and/or "big sister" relationship. They confided in their parents and in later years, their friends. Teachers were supportive in later years. Seven subjects said they did not confide in anyone and five felt that no one "listened to them". One third said they were more comfortable with females but over half said they were comfortable with both males and females. However, closest friends were female (30).

All subjects rated "hard work" as the most important value learned from their parents. Honesty and responsibility were second and third choices. They stated that their parents showed little interest in status and position. The family was the central focus of their parents' lives and an external social life was not important. Eleven subjects said that their parents showed little interest in their school activities, friends and personal problems.

All of the subjects assumed responsibility at an early age. Home and farm chores were mentioned as well as care of siblings. Over half worked to help pay high school and college expenses and as they grew older home responsibilities increased.

Professional Preparation

Preparation Adequate

The majority (57 percent) felt that their educational preparation was adequate for their position and 28 percent said it wasn't, nine percent were uncertain and three did not respond. The most helpful courses taken were

those in the areas of management and leadership; for example, planning, supervision, personnel, finance, and time management. Secondly, they identified courses in human relations and social science as most important (psychology, sociology, etc). English, speech and writing were also mentioned as well as professional education subjects. Home Economists felt that subject matter courses in family, child development and consumer education had been helpful.

When asked to identify experiences which had been most helpful to them three areas were identified; participation in student activities and organizations, participation in professional organizations and various types of work experience.

Recommendations for needed courses and experiences were the same as those mentioned as most helpful. Almost everyone felt that more courses and experiences in leadership/management were needed. Attention to women's issues, networking, mentoring and assertiveness training were seen as needed, as well as internships and opportunities to improve speaking and writing skills. Their own professional development was enhanced by opportunities to participate in inservice programs, leadership activities, and hands-on work experiences.

Subjects were asked if they would make the same career choice again and 65 percent said "yes". Some felt that if they had had the same opportunities available to them as are now available to young women, they might have made other choices (17 percent not certain). Only 13 percent would not make the same choice again.

Career Issues

Career Decision-Making

Twenty-eight of the forty-six subjects stated that their original choice of a career was teaching. They stayed with this choice and later moved into

vocational education administration. Six had planned originally to enter a scientific/medical field, seven were interested in a business career and five selected a variety of other fields. Twenty percent said they had always known they would have a career and an additional 58 percent made a career choice before graduating from high school. An early career choice was made by a majority of the participants.

Over 50 percent said that their teachers/professors and other educators had the most influence on their career choice. Parents were second in influence. Courses in the humanities and social sciences (16) were favorite subjects, with science and math selected by twelve. English was mentioned specifically by ten. Eighty-five percent of the group rated themselves as above average to excellent students.

Only two of the 27 subjects with a home economics background said that being a Home Economist impacted negatively on their career.

Support System

Even though only one subject said she had a formal support network, 70 percent said that they received support along the way from family and colleagues. Forty percent received support from both males and females; 22 percent from males, and 13 percent said females (twenty-five percent named individuals rather than which sex provided support). Mentors were primarily bosses or superiors (26), educators (18), and family members (7). Two mentioned church leaders.

On The Job Issues

The subjects believe that it is more difficult for a woman to succeed in vocational education than for a man (72 percent). Sixty-one percent said they had been treated differently from males in similar positions. The most common areas of difference were in relation to salary and that women are not seen as

credible or knowledgeable.

Since vocational education leadership has been dominated by males, 70 percent of the subjects said their bosses had been predominantly males. The remaining 30 percent had worked for both males and females. Forty-one percent had no preference for a boss, male or female. Twenty -six percent would rather work for a male, only 4 percent preferred a female boss, 14 percent had no basis for comparison and 15 percent did not respond to the question.

Those who preferred male bosses provided comments regarding their choice. For example, women bosses were seen as "petty, less objective, too concerned about details and concerned about personal power".

Subjects were asked which of six factors were most instrumental in their receiving promotions in their careers. All factors were seen as important, with "being the best qualified for the job" and "being in the right place at the right time" rated highest and "planned and prepared for the position" rated lowest. (See Appendix for other factors)

Do women support other women in leadership positions? To that question 35 percent said "yes", 33 percent said "no", and 30 percent said "sometimes". This question resulted in many comments about the need for such support and for networks and mentors.

Leadership and Work Related Issues

The women in this study are most comfortable with a participatory style of leadership (65 percent). Thirteen percent were task oriented, seven percent practiced situational leadership and the remaining 15 percent could not be classified. Words such as open, team approach, involvement, etc, permeated their responses.

The most satisfying aspects of the job were: making an impact on

programs, implementing successful programs and getting others to accept new ideas. Also, they received a great deal of satisfaction from helping and seeing their staff members grow and improve. They found that personnel issues such as evaluating staff, dealing with difficult people, and internal conflict were the most difficult part of the job. Getting people to have vision and balancing work and family responsibilities were also difficult areas.

Human relations skills and a sensitivity to people and their needs were identified by three-fourths of the subjects as the special qualities women bring to the work place. They feel that women have excellent management skills in areas such as decision-making, problem-solving and setting goals. Some feel that women work harder than males, listen better, are less impulsive and competitive.

The Future for Women in Leadership

When asked what the future holds for women in leadership, respondents offered a variety of opinions. Many echoed the fact that in time there will be more successful women in leadership positions and their success will prove that women are competent and credible. They feel the criteria for hiring and promotion will be based on competence and qualifications with less consideration given to the sex of the individual. Many believe that more women are seeking careers and have a desire and need to get ahead and they will not give up, women will receive more support as networking and mentoring become formalized and institutions are becoming more tolerant of women with children and are recognizing that "the company" has a role to play in supporting women with families.

Subjects offered a variety of suggestions for women seeking leadership

positions; be prepared, study, keep up-to-date and become qualified and competent. Develop management skills, work hard and ask for extra responsibilities to enhance visibility. They suggest that women need to improve their attitude and self-image. Getting involved in a variety of activities early in a career is seen as important. Also, women need to set goals, plan, and have vision.

A small number of respondents (6) addressed stereotypical female behaviors on the job. They said women shouldn't nag, must keep their personalities under control, should smile sweetly, be mature and not cry "Discrimination!".

FACTORS INFLUENCING SUCCESS

An analysis of the family, personal, educational and work histories of these forty-six successful women resulted in the identification of some common factors which made a difference in their lives and careers. The prototype of a successful woman in a vocational education leadership position that emerged is similar in some respects to that of the successful woman in the corporate world, but very different in other areas.

Family and Personal Background

There is a considerable body of knowledge on early socialization and how traditional, stereotypical attitudes and expectations regarding male/female roles impact on our lives. We learn how to behave from our family, peers and society and are rewarded accordingly. It is believed that females suffer most from this early socialization process and success comes only to those who do not adhere to the stereotypical roles or are in some way "unique".

The majority of the subjects in this study grew up in traditional, stable, happy home environments with stereotypical role models. They came from rural, farm families, none of the parents were divorced and the family was the central focus of their parents' lives. They were not from privileged backgrounds and parents had little interest in prestige, status, and activities outside the home. A minority of the parents were involved in church and community activities.

This traditional background was not detrimental to their ability and desire to achieve in school or in a career. In fact, this environment was influential in providing them with a good self-image, a feeling of security and support throughout their growing-up years.

Fifty-six percent were first born or an only child (6) which is a factor commonly found among successful women. Twenty-six percent were second born and the average number of children per family was 3.3.

Those that were the oldest assumed responsibility for the care of their siblings with whom they had good relationships. The average number of years between the youngest and oldest child was six years. Subjects stated that there was always someone with whom you could share your problems. Also, they learned negotiation, guidance, listening and management skills as they served a "mother/big sister" role. By being needed and an important family member they developed a positive self-image.

Even though they were expected to play the typical female role, this expectation did not extend to some important areas. For example, they were expected to assume responsibility at an early age and did all kinds of chores on the farm and in the home. Therefore, they developed a variety of skills of both a male and female nature which helped them later in life. Normal play activities with neighborhood girls and boys were of an active, outdoor type which gave them an opportunity to compete with boys while maintaining close relationships with female friends.

These subjects differed in that they were closer to their mothers than their fathers. Mother was the dominant figure in their lives; she served as confidante and supporter and encouraged them to achieve. They had strong female role models within the extended family and in school. One might say they were brought up the "old fashioned way".

Almost every subject stated that the major value she learned from her parents was "hard work", then came honesty and responsibility. These values came from their strong religious beliefs.

It is said that the ability to face difficulties or failure and move on

is important to achieving success and positive feelings of self-worth. These women were able to do that. They did not dwell on past problems and in many cases were unable to identify negative experiences in their lives. They were comfortable with both males and females and enjoyed the company of older people as well as those their own age.

There was no indication that these women were more likely to take risks than conform. Approximately half saw themselves as competitive, adventurous, aggressive or independent and most were competitive when it came to academics. They were serious students and few mentioned "fun" activities as being most rewarding.

Education was important to their parents. It was expected that they would attend college because their parents wanted more for them than they had been able to achieve. They were active in school, church and community activities. This provided them with opportunities to work with groups, compete, share, etc. Having attended small schools, they could develop an identity and receive feedback on their accomplishments. They rated themselves as good to excellent students and felt that others listened to them. As they grew older, they assumed leadership roles in various organizations. They saw these experiences as very valuable in preparing them for their future career role.

Five subjects were less positive about their growing-up years. They felt that their opinions didn't matter, they didn't "fit in", they had a poor relationship with their fathers and were loners. They succeeded because they depended on themselves. They were more independent and aggressive.

Women in the corporate world often delay marriage and having children until their careers are secure. The women in this study married in their teens and twenties (11 did not marry). It is interesting to note that

46 percent of those who married did not have children and 22 percent had only one child. This was an important factor in their success because they had more time and energy to expend on their careers. Married subjects expressed the importance of their husbands' support for their careers. Children were somewhat less supportive. The General group tended to receive more support from family members throughout their lives than the Home Economists. This may be because of the image and expectations attached to being a Home Economist.

The importance of hard work, faith and education was learned early and well. This, combined with their active participation in a variety of experiences, gave them confidence and a desire for learning and continued success.

Professional Preparation

The majority of the women stated that their educational preparation was adequate for the position they now hold and they would make the same career choice again. Only seven percent of the Home Economists felt that their preparation in a stereotypical female discipline had a negative impact on their career. The twenty-eight percent who were dissatisfied with their professional preparation said their programs were too narrow and they needed more hands-on experience in the work world. Some were not prepared as vocational educators, but felt they brought a new dimension to the job and field. There was unanimous support for the value of courses in management/leadership. Those who had taken such courses felt they were better qualified and more confident about their ability to do the job. Many did not develop these skills in their college years but participated in inservice programs or learned on the job.

Human relations/social science courses were cited as very useful and

helpful in their personal and professional lives. Professional courses such as methods, curriculum development and evaluation, were high on the list. This is interesting in light of the fact that these courses are now being ridiculed by educators and the public.

Taking advantage of opportunities to assume a leadership role in community, school and professional organizations helped these women develop leadership and organizational skills. Several mentioned the value of writing a dissertation, serving on curriculum committees, student teaching and making presentations. They recommended that young women participate in a variety of activities early in their careers and take advantage of inservice programs to improve specific skills. The importance of work experiences, assistantships, internships, etc, especially during the college years, was stressed. Also, they encouraged young women to find a mentor and to network if they want to be successful.

The women in this study believe that one's professional preparation is important to success on the job. They were not sure that an individual can learn the skills and acquire the knowledge needed through courses unless drastic changes are made in content and experiences.

Career Decision-Making

There is substantial support in the literature regarding the value of making early career decisions. It is proposed that males and females differ in their perceptions of a job and a career and women fail to plan and follow a career path. If they are successful, women often give credit to others or to "luck" rather than to their own abilities.

The women in this study planned early in life to attend college and have a career. A career choice was made by all except eleven percent before they

left high school. Teachers and other educators had the greatest influence on their career choice. Mothers were influential also. They did not select careers similar to their fathers as is often the case with corporate women. Only seventeen percent selected an occupation similar to their mothers' and few mothers had held a supervisory position.

These women made appropriate career decisions during both their early and later years. There is no way of knowing if these were conscious or unconscious decisions. They expected to attend college, so the majority enrolled in an academic program in high school and were rewarded for their excellence. They understood that to advance in their profession they needed a broader program than that offered in their undergraduate major. As they obtained advanced degrees they majored in a broader program (e.g. vocational education, educational administration) rather than electing to stay in their original discipline. Also, they recognized that an advanced degree was necessary to succeed in education, which is not always the case with corporate women.

Support Systems

Most had an unstructured support system throughout their careers, provided by family and colleagues. Bosses and supervisors served as mentors while educators served as role models when they were students. Few cited specific individual mentors. Since most of their superiors were male, as expected, they received more support from males than females. However, 40 percent said they received support from both sexes.

This makes one wonder if role models and diffused support networks aren't more important than a mentor per se, or at least more practical to consider. Mentoring is hard work and time consuming and it isn't easy to find people who want to play this role. Maybe we need to spend more time and energy on

helping families, colleagues and groups of educators provide a broad support system for women.

Work Related Issues

This group believes that it is still more difficult for a woman than a man to succeed in vocational education and over half stated that they had been treated differently from men in similar positions. Since most had had male bosses only, it was difficult for them to respond to their preference for a boss. The most discouraging fact was that only one-third feel that women support other women in leadership positions. Another third said "sometimes", but their comments about women as leaders were not positive. Several had a negative experience with a female boss and never wanted to work for a woman again. However, no one reported a similar attitude resulting from a bad experience with a male boss.

These women did not believe that luck was a factor in their promotions. They believed in their own competence and qualifications, but realized that "being in the right place at the right time" was a critical factor also.

These subjects support the belief that females are more caring and sensitive than men and possess the qualities needed to humanize the organizational environment. In addition, women are seen as hard workers who have the management skills to get the job done, and are less rash or impulsive. If this is so, then why do women receive less support as leaders?

Many of the subjects expressed their concerns about these issues and the need for self-examination. We must examine our attitudes and behavior and realize that what we say is not always manifested in our behavior.

The subjects prefer a participatory management style which correlates with prior statements regarding the qualities women bring to the work place.

Their responses support other studies on females and job satisfaction. They receive their greatest rewards from helping, assisting and motivating others and building successful programs. Implementing change and personnel issues cause them the greatest difficulty.

In recent years, a great deal has been written about what makes an organization excellent. It has been found that those organizations and leaders who have concern for their workers and involve them in the decision-making process are most successful. This writer believes that we must stop trying to change women to fit the organizational model and place emphasis on changing the organization to fit the "humanizing model".

The work history of these subjects is typical of people who select a teaching career. A classroom teacher is not promoted. He/she receives pay raises based on years of service. Promotion requires a change in direction and enrollment in a program to obtain required courses and/or certification for a specific position (e.g. principal, superintendent, etc.). With an advanced degree, an individual can move into higher level positions at the state, federal and university level. The "fast track" phenomenon is not common in educational institutions. This impacts on advancement as well as salary.

Most of the women in this study did not obtain a leadership position until they were over thirty years of age and eighty-nine percent had been continually employed. Forty-six subjects provided information on their salary range. Eight were earning between $45,000 to $50,000 per year and 14 earned over $50,000. Six were still earning less than $34,999, while 12 had a yearly salary of $35,000 to 44,900.

Acceptance as leaders was difficult to obtain, especially from males in the traditional male oriented vocational disciplines. Many had to develop new

skills and knowledge in such areas as politics, finances, legislation and community relations. They felt that their willingness to take on responsibility and their ability to follow through were key elements in their success.

The Future for Women in Leadership Positions

Most of the subjects feel that a great deal of progress has been made in opening up opportunities for women in vocational education leadership; however, the majority stated that we have a long way to go.

These female leaders believe that in time there will be more women in leadership positions and their success will prove that women are competent. Credibility and acceptance will follow.

The key word is prove; women must prove themselves! Even women believe this. Having the right qualifications, credentials and experience isn't always enough for a woman to be hired or promoted. She must prove herself to superiors, subordinates and other women. At the same time she must carry the burden of being the representative of all women who will follow her. This is a great deal to ask of anyone and especially a person who must balance home and family responsibilities.

Another factor which will impact on the future for women in leadership was identified: more emphasis will be given to competence and qualification and less to the sex of the individual.

We know that under law it is illegal to discriminate on the basis of sex, and most agencies and institutions have changed their hiring criteria. Still, women are not advancing at the same rate as men. One can speculate that the reasons do not relate to hiring criteria.

The desire of more women for a career was cited as a factor which will

enhance opportunities for women. The availability of more support networks and mentors will have a positive impact on women's careers. Five subjects said, "Hang in there and don't give up".

The advice given to young women by this group is based on the typical female perceptions of what it takes to make it in the work world; that is, personal factors over which the individual has control. The implication is that if you work hard, study, keep up-to-date and assume extra responsibilities, you will be rewarded. All agreed that one must be prepared and competent to be successful. Other suggestions included: set goals for the future, take initiative, improve self-image and attitude, and network.

Six subjects mentioned that women need to get credit for their accomplishments and be more visible. This is the closest they came to identifying factors within the organization which keep women in their place. Change will continue to be slow unless a concerted effort is made to remove the human and organizational barriers which impact on a woman's career.

CONCLUSION

In summary, it is apparent that the women in this study grew-up in a traditional home environment, had stereotypical female role models, followed a typical female career path, yet were successful in achieving a high level leadership position in the male dominated field of vocational education. It may be as important to pay as much attention to those factors which influenced their success as to the changes women are urged to make in order to be successful in a leadership position.

This does not mean that changes are not needed in how we socialize our children, in providing the same choices and opportunities for females as is available to males, or in eliminating barriers to advancement within the organizational environment. Women will continue to struggle to get ahead and will be faced with many problems in the work place. The point is that we must allow women to make choices and help them realize that you do not need to be "non-traditional" or unique in order to be successful.

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APPENDICES

A. List of Participants in the Study

B. Letter to General Group Requesting Participation in Study

C. Letter to Home Economist Group Requesting Participation in Study

D. Cover Letter to Participants in Study

E. Instruments

   1. Section I: Questionnaire
   2. Section II: Guidelines for Tape Recording Responses for the Study

F. Samples of Follow-up Letters (5)

Appendix A

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Appendix B

Letter to General Group
Requesting Participation in Study

June 18, 1986

Ms. [first] [middle] [last], [position]
[employer]
[street]
[city], [state] [zip]

Dear Ms. [last],

I have always wondered what it takes for a woman to be successful in achieving a high-level leadership position in a male-dominated field like vocational education. Having served as a vocational leader, I have my own opinions on the matter, but would like to hear what others have to say. Would you like to be involved?

I plan to contact approximately twenty-five women in vocational leadership positions across the country Each will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire and to share their experiences on tape (I will provide the tape). Because we are all busy people, responding on tape should be easier and more interesting. The entire task will take approximately one hour of your time.

Information of this nature will be useful to us who are preparing women for the professions. I think you will agree that most young women do not see themselves as leaders and do little to prepare themselves for high-level positions. How can we change their attitudes and desires? Maybe you have some information which can be shared with others that will make a difference. Also, women in vocational education need to receive more recognition. Our contributions to the profession have not always received the recognition deserved, so here is an opportunity to change that. Results of the study will provide the basis of a book I am writing on the subject.

I would like to give credit to everyone who participates because I think it's important that you are recognized as a national leader. Naturally, no one will be identified in the body of the study.

As a professor in Leadership Development at the University of Delaware, I use the book <u>The Managerial Women</u> by Hennig and Jardim in my classes. This book is a study of twenty-five successful female business executives. Although an important and thoughtful study of women in leadership, the study focused on women who came from privileged backgrounds and had many opportunities available to

them. I wonder if we in education were as lucky or did we make our opportunities? This study will explore this and other aspects of the careers of our colleagues.

As I would like to initiate the study as soon as possible, it would be appreciated if you would let me know whether you can participate. Please respond by mail or call me at my office (302) 451-1589 or at home (302) 454-1569 by July 3, 1986.

Thanks so much for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you within the next two weeks.

Sincerely,

Lila C. Murphy, Professor
Individual and Family Studies

LCM:mlo

Enclosure

DETACH AND RETURN IN THE SELF-ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE

- -

Date: _____

I will be able to participate /____/ in the study of Women in Vocational Education Leadership Positions.

I will not be able to participate /____/ in the study of Women in Vocational Education Leadership Positions.

Name: _____ Title: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Work: _____ Home: _____

If summer mailing address and/or phone number are different, please indicate below.

Appendix C

Letter to Home Economists
Requesting Participation in Study

June 16, 1986

[gender] [first] [middle] [last], [position]
[employer]
[employer 2]
[street]
[city], [state] [zip]

Dear [gender] [last],

Have you ever noticed how many women in vocational education leadership positions have a background in home economics? This fact has always intrigued me and I would like to discover why these women (including you) have been successful in achieving high-level positions in a male-dominated field. Having served as a vocational leader, I have my own opinions on the matter. However, I think it is important to hear what others have to say. Would you like to be involved?

I plan to contact approximately twenty-five women in vocational leadership positions across the country Each will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire and to share their experiences on tape (I will provide the tape). Because we are all busy people, responding on tape should be easier and more interesting. The entire task will take approximately one hour of your time.

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them. I wonder if we in education were as lucky or did we make our opportunities? This study will explore this and other aspects of the careers of our colleagues.

As I would like to initiate the study as soon as possible, it would be appreciated if you would let me know whether you can participate. Please respond by mail or call me at my office (302) 451-1589 or at home (302) 454-1569 by July 3, 1986.

Thanks so much for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you within the next two weeks.

Sincerely,

Lila C. Murphy, Professor
Individual and Family Studies

LCM:mlo

Enclosure

DETACH AND RETURN IN THE SELF-ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE

- - - -

Appendix D

Cover Letter to Participants in Study

August 1, 1986

Dear ;

Thank you for your affirmative response to my request to participate in a Study of Women in Vocational Education Leadership Positions. I was so pleased with the enthusiastic reactions expressed by those contacted and the overwhelming number who offered to participate. With this degree of interest, the project can't help but be successful. Now to get down to business!

Enclosed you will find (1) a brief questionnaire which is to be completed and returned to me (Section I), (2) guidelines for recording taped responses related to your background, professional preparation and career (Section II), and (3) a tape for recording oral responses which will be returned to me also. (Manila envelope enclosed for mailing.)

Please review these materials carefully before completing the written and oral sections of the study. You may find it helpful to jot down ideas for each part of Section II before you record your responses.

I know you are a busy person which is all the more reason why I appreciate your assistance. I believe that together we will be able to document the contributions of women to the profession, learn a great deal about achieving success in a male-dominated field and learn how we can help other women who aspire to leadership positions.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call me; office number (302) 451-1569 or at home (302) 454-1589. If I'm not available leave a message and I will get back to you as soon as possible. I need your responses by October 17, if possible.

Once again my sincere appreciation for your help. Good luck!

Sincerely,

Lila C. Murphy, Professor
Individual and Family Studies

LCM:mlo

Enclosures

Appendix E-1

Section I

Questionnaire

A STUDY OF WOMEN IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

Employer: _____

Work Telephone: _____ Home Telephone: _____

Section I (Written)

Please complete the following brief questionnaire and return it with your taped response to Section II.

Educational History

1. High School Course of Study:
   Academic _____, Vocational _____, General _____, Other _____

2. Degrees Received:
   a. Baccalaureate: Major in _____
   b. Masters: Major in _____
   c. Doctorate: Major in _____

Family History

1. Circle number of years of parents education. List parents primary occupation and highest degree received, if applicable.

   a. Father: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18+
   b. Mother: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18+
   c. Father's Occupation _____ Degree _____
   d. Mother's Occupation _____ Degree _____

2. Was your mother employed when you were growing up? Yes _____ No _____
   Explain:

3. Did your mother hold a position that required supervision of other workers? Yes _____ No _____

4. If you have brothers and sisters, list them below with age and occupation in descending order from oldest to youngest. Include yourself on the list.

Brother (b) or Sister (s) Write Me for Self	Age	Occupation

5. When you were growing up, were both of your parents in the home? Yes _____ No _____ (If your answer is no, complete the following that apply (use a check mark or fill-in the blank.)

a. My mother died when I was _____ years old.
b. My father died when I was _____ years old.
c. My parents never lived together. _____
d. I lived primarily with my mother _____; father _____
e. I was raised by _____ (if other than parent).
f. My parents divorced when I was _____ years old.
g. My mother remarried when I was _____ years old.
h. My father remarried when I was _____ years old.
i. I saw my _____ (parent not in home) often _____, seldom _____ or never _____.
j. Other (explain) _____

_____

Marital Information

1. My marital status is _____. Age when married _____.
2. I have _____ children, ages _____
3. Were you a single parent at any time during your career? Yes _____ No _____ Explain:

_____

_____

_____

4. Check if you worked full time when your children were: preschool age _____, in elementary school _____, in high school _____.

5. Was your spouse supportive of your career? Explain

_____

_____

_____

6. Were your children supportive of your career? Explain

_____

_____

_____

Work History by Age Level

(If you left work for an extended period include at appropriate age level.)

Age	Title of Position (e.g. Home Economic Teacher, State Supervisor of Business Ed.)
At age 25 yrs. my position was/is	_____
At age _____ my position was/is	_____
At age _____ my position was/is	_____
At age _____ my position was/is	_____
At age _____ my position was/is	_____
At age _____ my position was/is	_____
At age _____ my position was/is	_____
At age _____ my position was/is	_____
At age _____ my position was/is	_____

(Place an asterisk by the age at which you assumed your first leadership/ managerial position in Vocational Education. Leadership position means responsible for the activities/action/supervision of others.)

Appendix E-2

Section II

Guidelines for Tape Recording
Responses for the Study

From this point on, you will be sharing information, ideas, opinions and comments on tape. I have prepared a series of questions to gather data on (a) your growing-up years, (b) your professional preparation, and (c) your career. Please respond in the order presented. It would be helpful if you would state on the tape the topic you are addressing (e.g. A. Background Information: The Growing-Up Years).

Under each topic there are statements to guide your thinking and responses. You may want to review these before you begin to record. Try to respond to these statements somewhere in your discussion. However, feel free to add additional information, discuss items in-depth or make comments needed for clarification Consider the process as an interview without an interviewer.

Please don't worry about making a "perfect" tape. Don't spend time redoing the tape, correcting, etc. Simply say what you feel and let it go. Be sure to test the tape to make certain everything is working properly. State your name at the beginning of the tape.

A. Background Information: The Growing-Up Years

1. The following statements relate to your "growing-up" years. Respond to the statements and share any additional information and comments you desire based on your early and middle childhood experiences (until you entered high school).

   o DURING MY EARLY AND MIDDLE CHILDHOOD YEARS:

   a. I was closest to (which parent) _____.
   b. My relationship with my brothers and sisters was _____.
   c. My closest friends were _____ (male or female)?
   d. I enjoyed activities such as _____.
   e. My major support came from _____.
   f. I confided in _____.
   g. My parents taught me the value of _____.
   h. My parents showed little interest in _____.
   i. I was expected to assume responsibility by _____.
   j. My opinion was important and listened to by _____.
   k. I excelled at _____.
   l. I was not very good at _____.
   m. My greatest satisfaction came from _____.
   n. My major problems were _____.
   o. Basically, I was a _____ child/person (e.g. quiet, loner, aggressive, competitive, reserved, dependent, adventurous, etc.).
   p. My behavior and ideas were influenced by _____.

2. Second - respond to the same statements listed under item I as they apply to your high school and college years. If you feel that your experiences were different at each level, indicate that fact as you respond to each statement.

   o WHEN I WAS A HIGH SCHOOL/COLLEGE STUDENT
   (Refer to the statments under early and middle childhood.)

3. Third - respond to the following statements and whenever possible clarify your responses with examples/experiences.

   a. I grew up in a traditional _____, non-traditional _____ home.
   b. My parents attitudes toward male and female roles were _____.
   c. I was more comfortable with males _____, females _____.
   d. I was more comfortable with people my own age _____, older people _____, by myself _____, other _____.
   e. I was encouraged to conform _____, take risks _____.
   f. My parents or guardian believed that education and achieving was important _____, was not important _____.
   g. It was expected that I would attend college _____, get married _____, other _____.
   h. I was a _____ student (good, fair, average, excellent) and my favorite subject was _____.

B. Professional Preparation

Discuss:

1. Do you feel that your educational preparation was adequate for the leadership position you hold?

2. Identify those courses which you had at the undergraduate and graduate level which have been most useful to you as a leader. (Be as specific as possible.)

3. Identify those experiences which you had at the undergraduate and graduate level which have been most useful to you as a leader. (Be as specific as possible.)

4. What courses are needed at the undergraduate and graduate level to better prepare women for leadership positions?

5. What experiences are needed at the undergraduate and graduate level or on an inservice basis, to better prepare women for leadership positions?

6. What opportunities were available to you to develop/improve your leadership competencies?

C. Career Information

Discuss:

1. When did you decide you wanted a career?

2. What was your original career choice? Did you move to a different career later? Explain.

3. Who had the greatest influence on your choice of career?

4. Throughout your career, who have been your mentors?

5. Did you have a support system/network during your career?

6. Did you receive support and encouragement from other professional, males and/or females, during your career?

7. Have your bosses been primarily males or females?

8. Which did you prefer as a boss - a male or female? Why?

9. Were you treated differently then males in similar positions?

10. Indicate which of the following were the most influential factors in your advancement/ promotions.

    a. In the right place at the right time.
    b. Support from significant other.
    c. Best qualified for the job.
    d. Extraordinary effort recognized and rewarded.
    e. Lucky break.
    f. Prepared self for position(s) and planned a strategy to achieve success.
    g. Other

11. Would you make the same career choice if you had to do it all over again?

12. Describe the style of leadership with which you are most comfortable. (How you relate to others and how you get tasks accomplished.)

13. What positive attributes do you think women bring to a leadership/ management position?

14. What are the most difficult aspects of your job? Most rewarding?

15. Do you think women are supportive of other women in leadership positions?

16. Do you think it is more difficult for a women to achieve success in a vocational education leadership position than for a man?

17. What forces or changes do you think will impact on the future success of women in leadership positions?

18. What advice do you have for women aspiring to a leadership position?

ADD ANY OTHER INFORMATION OR COMMENTS DESIRED

Answer only if you have a background in home economics:

Has being a home economist, a traditional female occupation, been a positive or negative factor in achieving success in a male-dominated field?

Appendix F-1

Samples of Follow-Up Letters

September 19, 1986

Dear ,

Hope you had a nice summer and restful vacation. With September comes all the reminders of "things to be done." I hate to add another but am anxious to hear from you.

My study on Women in Vocational Education Leadership Positions is moving along nicely. As stated in earlier correspondence the enthusiasm and commitment of those participating has been very rewarding. I hope you will be able to complete your questionnaire and tape within the next two weeks. I need your help and involvement. Set a target date for the end of September.

Just a reminder that all information is confidential and only aggregate data will be used in the study.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Lila C. Murphy, Professor
Individual and Family Studies

LCM:mlo

Appendix F-2

November 11, 1986

M E M O R A N D U M

TO : Participants in Study of Women in Vocational Education Leadership Positions

FROM: Lila C. Murphy
Professor, Department of Individual and Family Studies

RE : Status of Study

Thanks to those of you who have returned your tapes and/or questionnaires. Some interesting findings are beginning to emerge.

To those of you who have had difficulty completing your materials - you are not alone! I know how busy you are, so please don't feel bad. There is still time to participate. If you are having problems with the tape, you may complete the white form instead and return it along with the blue one.

This is a small study, so the input from each of the 56 who have agreed to participate is very important!

I hope to present some preliminary data at the AVA meeting in December, so I'm counting on hearing from you soon! Thanks.

LCM/js

Appendix F-3

February 13, 1987

Dear ,

My sincere thanks for your response to my study on Women in Vocational Education Leadership Positions. The study is moving along nicely and I'm still overwhelmed with the support and enthusiasm of the respondents.

I will keep you informed about the progress of the study and send you copies of the findings when available.

Thanks for your help and interest.

Sincerely,

Lila C. Murphy, Professor
Individual and Family Studies

LCM/kp

Appendix F-4

April 22, 1987

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Participants in Study of Women in
Vocational Education Leadership Positions

FROM: Lila C. Murphy
Project Director

SUBJECT: Status of Study

With 82% of participants having completed this questionaire and tapes for the Study of Women in Vocational Education Leadership Positions, an analysis of results is in progress.

Some interesting findings are beginning to emerge. When the final report is complete, we will share the pertinent information with you.

In the meantime, we appreciate all your help and ask for your patience regarding the final analysis.

LCM/kp

Appendix F-5

November 12, 1987

Dear Participants,

Just a note to say I am finalizing the results of my study on Women in Vocational Education Leadership Positions. I plan to give a preliminary review of the results at the AVA Convention in Las Vegas at the Sex Equity Wheel of Fortune Round Tables scheduled for Sunday afternoon, December 6, 1987 from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. Check the program for details and/or changes. If you are there, please drop by so I can thank you in person for your assistance.

There are three additional pieces of information which I forgot to gather and hope you will provide. To facilitate your response I am enclosing a postcard so that you can record your answers quickly and return as soon as possible. I suggest that you complete as follows:

Questions

1. What is your current salary range:
   - A. Less than $25,000
   - B. $25,000 - $29,999
   - C. $30,000 - $34,999
   - D. $35,000 - $39,999
   - E. $40,000 - $44,999
   - F. $45,999 - $50,000
   - G. $50,000 +
2. What is the largest number of people you have ever supervised?
3. How many people do you currently supervise?

1. C 2. 50 3. 60 Name_____

Sample Response on Postcard

Remember, only aggregate numbers will be used. I need your name for follow-up purposes.

Hope to see you at AVA. Also, I will be sending you a summary of the results in the near future.

Sincerely,

Lila C. Murphy, Professor
Dept. of Individual & Family Studies

LCM:mr